

Today, we must not only celebrate the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, we must breathe new life into this bill.

As several provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 expire in 2007, namely the preclearance and bilingual provisions, I urge the President and this Congress to make certain reauthorization does not become a back burner issue.

Lastly, I applaud my colleagues of this body who are the stalwarts on the issues of civil rights and voting rights, particularly Representatives JOHN LEWIS, JOHN CONYERS and CHARLIE RANGEL. I also applaud Reverend Jesse Jackson and many other faith leaders who continue to stand up for civil rights and human rights.

Again, I say to my colleagues that we should use every resource in Congress, especially those resources encapsulated in the Help America Vote Act, to ensure that every vote that is cast is counted.

#### TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY ELLIOTT

### HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Shirley Elliott, an exceptional Kentuckian. Elliott, a 72-year-old deputy sheriff, has served and protected the people of Knox County with distinction for 35 years. A man this committed to the safety and well being of his community deserves our recognition.

Like many eastern Kentucky teenagers from his generation, Elliott was prepared to work in the dark coal mines of Appalachia. He began helping his father haul coal out of the mines at the age of 15. In 1970, while he worked at a coal tippie in Knox County, he received an offer from then-Sheriff Jim Matt Mooneyham to become deputy sheriff. After a short time on duty, Elliott knew he had found his lifelong calling.

Thirty-five years later, Elliott is a pillar of the community that he serves and protects. The community and law enforcement officers in Knox County hold him in high regard, and he has earned a reputation as a mediator. Current Sheriff John Pickard recently told a Kentucky paper, "He's probably the best I've ever seen at calming a dangerous situation." Elliott says his strategy involves simply giving people time and space to cool off. During 35 years of service, he has never had to fire his .44-caliber Smith & Wesson during a potentially dangerous encounter.

Deputy Sheriff Elliott no longer works the night shift, which leaves more time for him to work in his garden and spend time with his wife Nikki and their children and grandchildren. He has considered retirement, but, for now, continues to proudly wear his badge.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I want to thank Deputy Sheriff Shirley Elliott for his sacrifice and service on behalf of the people of Knox County, Kentucky. His dedication and integrity are an inspiration to us all.

#### THE CRISIS IN NIGER—WE STILL HAVE NOT LEARNED

### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw attention to the crisis taking place now in the nation of Niger. Niger is currently facing one of the worst hunger crises in its history following severe drought and the country's worst locust invasion in 15 years.

The World Food Program maintains that 3.6 million of Niger's 11.5 million people face food shortages, while 2.5 million are on the brink of starvation. Some families are trying to survive by eating leaves and wild roots. The most vulnerable are young children, with 800,000 "at risk", according to WFP. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) reports that 10–15 are dying every week.

The United Nations' initial efforts to address the food crisis have been severely hindered by the slow response of the international community. It first alerted the international community to Niger's food shortages in November 2004. Subsequent appeals in March and May were both left unfulfilled. By July 2005 its \$30.7 million appeal had still not been fully funded. Government officials in Niger and international aid workers say a slow response from donor countries to months of appeals has allowed the situation to spiral to emergency status.

Recent images coming from Niger over the last few days, along with increased calls from media and aid groups, has elicited an international response. Desperately needed food aid is now starting to get into the hands of the people, but more is needed. The U.S. announced on Tuesday, that it would be sending \$7 million of food related assistance to the region, in addition to \$1.6 million in emergency assistance it gave in May, and \$4.6 million in overall 2005 assistance.

While this is welcomed, the slow pace of the response is cause for concern, especially after the Bush Administration announced in June that it would allocate \$674.4 million in emergency food aid to Africa in 2005. Aid experts have asserted that the cost per person of addressing the Niger crisis has increased nearly 100 fold because of the delay in assistance.

Unfortunately, the situation in Niger had to deteriorate to a point where the world was again seeing emaciated children on the brink of death before it acted. This simply cannot continue to happen if we are to end the unnecessary occurrence of famine. Indeed, leaders in the field of humanitarian assistance are asking for a shift in the way that the world responds to such challenges.

A July 26th article in USA Today entitled "Aid Workers Say Niger Crisis Illustrates Need For Reform", includes the opinions of Clare Godfrey, head of humanitarian advocacy for the aid group Oxfam.

Ms. Godfrey argues that the United Nations should establish a \$1 billion emergency famine relief fund to quickly respond to potential famine crises at the very first signs of trouble. Such a system would be much more cost effective, and prevent the unnecessary loss of life that we have seen in Niger. Ms. Godfrey

further argues that such a mechanism could be agreed to at the upcoming U.N. Summit in September.

One could also argue that the famine fund approach may be a more efficient use of the \$674.4 million in African emergency food aid which President Bush pledged in June. All one can say for sure is that the current international response to famine crises is inadequate—the people of Niger can attest to that.

[From USA Today, July 26, 2005]

#### AID WORKERS SAY NIGER CRISIS ILLUSTRATES NEED FOR REFORM

(By Francis Temman)

LONDON—Repeated U.N. appeals for money for Niger to save starving children were not answered until the situation became desperate, showing why the world needs to change the way it responds to humanitarian crises, aid workers say.

Donations have jumped dramatically in the last week because of increased media attention and TV images of the famine, U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland has said.

Mike Kiernan, a spokesman for Save the Children USA, said children are especially vulnerable when food is in short supply, so the world must respond quickly.

"We believe that governments and the United Nations must and can do more to help protect children in every stage of a humanitarian response," Kiernan said Tuesday.

A key, he said, was mobilizing public opinion. He said Save the Children had seen an extraordinary response from Americans to appeals made on its behalf by actor Brad Pitt for another African country, Ethiopia.

John O'Shea, chief executive of the Irish aid agency Goal, said one way of shocking the world into action might be for the United Nations to declare itself incapable of responding.

He said the international community too often sits back and expects the United Nations to act as its "fire brigade"—which "it isn't."

"It's a collection of organizations, some good, some reasonably good, some bureaucratic, some full of corruption, some wasteful," O'Shea said. "The bottom line is they are not doing the job."

The United Nations first appealed for help for Niger in November and got almost no response. A March appeal for \$16 million got about \$1 million. A May 25 plea for \$30.7 million has received \$7.6 million—about 25 percent of the amount requested—U.N. officials say.

The British aid agency Oxfam said the United Nations should instead have a \$1 billion emergency fund to draw on when it sees situations like the one in Niger developing.

Oxfam said the emergency fund should be adopted at a summit in September at which U.N. states are to consider proposed reforms.

"It's a real opportunity to change things around . . . how the world responds to crises like Niger," Clare Godfrey, Oxfam's head of humanitarian advocacy, said in an interview.

If the fund had been in place in November when the U.N. first pleaded for help for Niger, the money could have been drawn from it immediately, Godfrey said.

Hilary Benn, Britain's Cabinet minister for international aid, proposed such a fund last year, Godfrey said.

"The Nigers of the world won't happen again if there's commitment behind the rhetoric," Godfrey said.